United Nations A/69/L.86

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
18 August 2015

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Agenda item 122
Multilingualism

Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Costa Rica, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania, Senegal and Timor-Leste: draft resolution

Multilingualism

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that multilingualism contributes to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recognizing also that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally,

Recognizing further, in this regard, that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding, and recognizing the importance of the capacity to communicate to the peoples of the world in their own languages, including in formats accessible to persons with disabilities,

Stressing the need for strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations,

Recalling that Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are both the official and the working languages of the General Assembly, including its committees and subcommittees,[1] and of the Security Council,[2] that Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the official languages and English, French and Spanish the working languages of the Economic and Social Council,[3] and that English and French are the working languages of the Secretariat,[4]

Emphasizing the importance of multilingualism in the activities of the United Nations, including those linked to public relations and information,

[1] Rule 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.
[2] Rule 41 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.
[3] Rule 32 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.
[4] See resolution 2 (I), annex.

Please recycle

Recognizing the contribution of multilingualism in promoting international peace and security, development and human rights, through the work of the United Nations departments and offices,

Recalling its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, by which it adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[5] in particular article 27 thereof, concerning the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities,

Recalling also its resolutions 2 (I) of 1 February 1946, 2480 B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968, 42/207 C of 11 December 1987 and 50/11 of 2 November 1995, and other subsequent resolutions relating to multilingualism, including resolutions 67/292 of 24 July 2013, 68/252 of 27 December 2013, 68/307 of 10 September 2014, 69/96 A-B of 5 December 2014, 69/250 of 29 December 2014 and 69/287 of 8 June 2015,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[6]

I
Multilingualism in general and the role of the Secretariat

2. *Emphasizes* the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations;

3. *Underlines* the need for the full implementation of all resolutions establishing language arrangements for the official languages of the United Nations and the working languages of the Secretariat;

4. *Also underlines* the responsibility of the Secretariat in integrating multilingualism into its activities, from within existing resources, on an equitable basis;

5. *Welcomes* the recent appointment by the Secretary-General of the Coordinator for Multilingualism, who is responsible for the overall implementation of multilingualism Secretariat-wide, calls upon all departments and offices within the Secretariat to fully support the work of the Coordinator in the implementation of the relevant mandates on multilingualism, and requests the Secretary-General to report thereon in his next report on multilingualism;

6. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to continue to develop the network of focal points that supports the Coordinator for Multilingualism in effectively and consistently implementing relevant resolutions throughout the Secretariat, and invites the Secretary-General, through his role in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to support a comprehensive and coordinated approach on multilingualism within the United Nations system, taking into consideration the relevant recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on multilingualism;[7]

7. *Welcomes* the implementation, within the United Nations, of a day dedicated to each of the official languages in order to inform and raise awareness of

[5] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[6] A/69/282.
[7] A/67/78.

their history, culture and use, encourages the Secretary-General to further strengthen this approach in a cost-neutral manner, if needed through the participation of partner organizations, including Member States and institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and also encourages the Secretary-General to consider extending this important initiative to other, non-official languages spoken throughout the world;

8. *Also welcomes* the efforts made by international organizations based on a shared language to increase their cooperation with the United Nations regarding multilingualism;

9. *Further welcomes* the activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Member States, entities of the United Nations system, other international organizations and all other participating bodies aimed at fostering respect for and the promotion and protection of all languages, in particular endangered ones, linguistic diversity and multilingualism;

10. *Reaffirms* that linguistic diversity is an important element of cultural diversity, stresses the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,[8] which entered into force on 18 March 2007, and recalls the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace of 15 October 2003;[9]

II
Role of the Department of Public Information in multilingualism

11. *Reaffirms* that the primary mission of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat is to provide, through its outreach activities, accurate, impartial, comprehensive, balanced, timely, relevant and multilingual information to the public on the tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization with the greatest transparency;

12. *Emphasizes* the importance of making use of all the official languages of the United Nations, ensuring their full and equitable treatment in all the activities of the Department of Public Information, with the aim of eliminating the disparity between the use of English and the use of the five other official languages, and in this regard reaffirms its request that the Secretary-General ensure that the Department has the staffing capacity in all the official languages necessary to undertake all its activities;

13. *Also emphasizes* the role of the Department of Public Information in building support for international peace and security, development and human rights for all and the contribution of multilingualism in achieving these goals;

14. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Department of Public Information to enhance multilingualism in all its activities, stresses the importance of ensuring that the texts of all new public United Nations documents in all six official languages,

---

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2440, No. 43977.

[9] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-second Session, Paris, 29 September-17 October 2003*, vol. 1, *Resolutions*, sect. IV, resolution 41, annex.

information materials and all older United Nations documents are made available through the United Nations websites and are accessible to Member States without delay;

15. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information to continue to use other languages in addition to the official languages when appropriate, according to the targeted audience, with a view to reaching the widest possible spectrum of audiences and extending the United Nations message to all the corners of the world in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization;

16. *Welcomes* the work done by the network of United Nations information centres, including the United Nations Regional Information Centre, in favour of the publication of United Nations information materials and the translation of important documents into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations, encourages the information centres to continue their important multilingual activities in the interactive and proactive aspects of their work and to develop web pages in local languages, and the Department of Public Information to provide the necessary resources and technical facilities, with a view to reaching the widest possible spectrum of audiences and extending the United Nations message to all corners of the world in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization, and encourages the continuation of efforts in this regard;

17. *Emphasizes* the importance of the network of United Nations information centres in enhancing the public image of the United Nations, in disseminating messages on the United Nations to local populations, especially in developing countries, bearing in mind that information in local languages has the strongest impact on local populations, and in mobilizing support for the work of the United Nations at the local level;

18. *Welcomes* the sustained effort to disseminate information globally by the use of official and non-official languages and traditional means of communication, and in this regard expresses its particular appreciation for the work currently being carried out by United Nations Radio in the six official languages, as well as in non-official languages;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to ensure that, in view of their income-generating nature, guided tours at United Nations Headquarters are consistently available in all six official languages of the United Nations;

20. *Welcomes* the initiative of the Secretary-General to also offer guided tours at United Nations Headquarters in non-official languages;

21. *Notes* the proposal by the Chair of the Committee on Information to establish a group of friends of the Chair on multilingualism aimed at working with the Department of Public Information on effective, pragmatic and creative ways in which the issue of multilingualism could be addressed;

22. *Notes with interest* the cost-neutral initiatives of the Secretariat to produce publications in official and non-official languages, to increase the volume of translated publications and to encourage a multilingual acquisition policy for the libraries of the United Nations, and requests the Secretariat to continue those initiatives;

23. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the Department of Public Information to work at the local level with other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to enhance the coordination of their communications activities, and urges the Department to encourage the United Nations Communications Group to promote linguistic diversity in its work;

24. *Recalls* paragraph 62 of its resolution 69/96 B, and encourages the Department of Public Information to prioritize the development of collaborative arrangements for the digitization of the audiovisual archives of the United Nations while preserving their multilingual character in a cost-neutral manner;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to exert all efforts to ensure that publications and other information services of the Secretariat, including the United Nations website and the United Nations News Service, contain comprehensive, balanced, objective and equitable information in all official languages about the issues before the Organization and that they maintain editorial independence, impartiality, accuracy and full consistency with resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly;

III
Websites and other web-based communication tools

26. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations website is an essential tool for Member States, the media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and the general public;

27. *Also reaffirms* the need to achieve full parity among the six official languages on all United Nations websites, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to include in his next report on multilingualism a comprehensive review of the United Nations websites, including content discrepancies among the official languages, as well as to identify innovative ideas, potential synergies and other cost-neutral measures to achieve full parity among the six official languages;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his next report on multilingualism a comprehensive review of the United Nations websites, presenting the status of content in non-official languages, as well as identifying innovative ideas, potential synergies and other cost-neutral measures to reinforce the broader multilingual development and enrichment of the United Nations websites, as appropriate;

29. *Recalls* paragraph 22 of its resolution 67/292, notes with concern the disparity between the English and the non-English languages on the websites maintained by the Secretariat, urges the Secretary-General to lead the efforts of all offices and departments of the Secretariat to take concrete action to address such uneven development, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders, including the Department of Public Information, content-providing offices and departments, in particular the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Secretariat, to continue their collaboration, within their respective mandates, so as to achieve full parity among the six official languages on all United Nations websites developed and maintained by all Secretariat entities, in full conformance with the principles of multilingualism and in compliance with the relevant resolutions addressing multilingualism and accessibility for persons with disabilities, by making every effort to translate materials currently available only in

English and by providing offices and departments with technological solutions that comply with the principle of parity, from within existing resources;

30. *Urges* the Secretary-General to strengthen his efforts to develop, maintain and update multilingual United Nations websites and the web page of the Secretary-General in all the official languages of the United Nations, from within existing resources and on an equitable basis;

31. *Reaffirms its request* to the Secretary-General to ensure, while maintaining an up-to-date and accurate website, the equitable distribution of financial and human resources within the Department of Public Information allocated to the United Nations website among all six official languages, with full respect for the needs and specificities of all six languages;

32. *Notes with concern* that the multilingual development and enrichment of the United Nations website in certain official languages has improved at a much slower rate than expected, and in this regard requests the Department of Public Information, in coordination with content-providing offices, to advance actions to achieve full parity among the six official languages on the United Nations website, in particular by expediting the filling of vacant posts in some sections;

33. *Takes note* of sections II.D and II.E of the report of the Secretary-General, requests the Secretary-General to continue his ongoing efforts in this regard, and urges all content-providing offices in the Secretariat to strengthen their efforts to translate into all official languages all English-language materials and databases posted on the United Nations website in the most practical, efficient and cost-effective manner, from within existing resources;

34. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Secretariat, to continue its efforts to ensure that technological infrastructures and supportive applications fully support Latin, non-Latin and bidirectional scripts in order to enhance the equality of all official languages on the United Nations website;

35. *Welcomes* the cooperative arrangements undertaken by the Department of Public Information with academic institutions to increase the number of web pages available in official and non-official languages, and requests the Secretary-General, in coordination with content-providing offices, to extend such cooperative arrangements, in a cost-effective manner, to all the official languages of the United Nations, bearing in mind the necessity of adherence to United Nations standards and guidelines;

36. *Underlines* the importance, in the implementation of new communication tools, such as social networks, of taking into account the linguistic dimension in order to assure full parity among the official languages of the Organization;

37. *Urges* the Secretariat to keep iSeek up to date in the two working languages of the Secretariat, to continue its efforts to implement iSeek at all duty stations and to develop and implement cost-neutral measures to provide Member States with secure access to the information currently accessible only on the intranet of the Secretariat;

IV
Documentation and conference services

38. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to complete the task of uploading all important older United Nations documents on to the United Nations website in all six official languages on a priority basis so that those archives are also made available to Member States through that medium;

39. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to ensure, through the provision of documentation services and meetings and publishing services under conference management, including high-quality translation and interpretation, effective multilingual communication equally in all the official languages of the United Nations among representatives of Member States in intergovernmental organs and among members of United Nations expert bodies;

40. *Reiterates with concern its request* that the Secretary-General ensure that the rules concerning the simultaneous distribution of documents in all six official languages are strictly respected as regards both the distribution of printed copies and the posting of parliamentary documentation on the Official Document System and the United Nations website, in accordance with section III, paragraph 5, of its resolution 55/222 of 23 December 2000;

41. *Reiterates* the need to fully implement and observe rule 55 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that, during the sessions of the Assembly, the *Journal of the United Nations* shall be published in the languages of the Assembly, from within existing resources;

42. *Underlines* that all the initiatives on the evolution of the working methods, including those introduced on a trial basis, shall comply with the principle of parity among the official languages of the Organization, with a view to preserving or enhancing the quality and scope of the services provided by the Secretariat;

V
Human resources management and staff training

43. *Recalls* its resolution 67/255 of 12 April 2013, in particular paragraph 35 thereof, in which it reaffirmed the need to respect the equality of the two working languages of the Secretariat, reaffirmed the use of additional working languages in specific duty stations as mandated, and in that regard requested the Secretary-General to ensure that vacancy announcements specified the need for either of the working languages of the Secretariat, unless the functions of the post required a specific working language;

44. *Notes with satisfaction* the willingness of the Secretariat to encourage staff members, in meetings with interpretation services, to use any of the six official languages of which they have a command;

45. *Encourages* United Nations staff members to continue to actively use existing training facilities to acquire and enhance their proficiency in one or more of the official languages of the United Nations;

46. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue the efforts to ensure that training opportunities in the six official languages are equally available to all staff;

47. *Recalls* section II, paragraph 17, of its resolution 61/244 of 22 December 2006, in which it acknowledged that the interaction of the United Nations with the local population in the field was essential and that language skills constituted an important element of the selection and training processes and therefore affirmed that a good command of the official language(s) spoken in the country of residence should be taken into account as an additional asset during those processes;

48. *Also recalls* its resolution 68/265 of 9 April 2014 on the mobility framework, and invites the Secretary-General to take into account applicable language skills while ensuring full compliance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations;

49. *Stresses* that the employment of staff shall continue to be carried out in strict accordance with Article 101 of the Charter and in line with the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions;

50. *Invites* the Secretary-General to ensure compliance with the requirement for United Nations staff to have the ability to use one of the working languages of the Secretariat, and encourages the Secretary-General to further the implementation of resolution 2480 B (XXIII);

51. *Also invites* the Secretary-General to take the appropriate measures to consider the linguistic specificities mentioned in vacancy announcements during the composition of interview panels for the employment of United Nations staff;

52. *Stresses* that the promotion of staff in the Professional and higher categories shall be carried out in strict accordance with Article 101 of the Charter and in line with the provisions of resolution 2480 B (XXIII) and the relevant provisions of resolution 55/258 of 14 June 2001;

VI
Language services staff

53. *Recalls* its resolution 66/233 of 24 December 2011, in particular paragraph 7 of section III thereof, and reiterates its request that the Secretary-General ensure that all language services are given equal treatment and are provided with equally favourable working conditions and resources, with a view to achieving maximum quality of services, with full respect for the specificities of the six official languages, and in that regard recalls section D, paragraph 11, of its resolution 54/248 of 23 December 1999;

54. *Acknowledges* the measures taken by the Secretary-General, in accordance with its resolutions, to address the issue of the replacement of retiring staff in the language services, and requests the Secretary-General to maintain and intensify those efforts, including through the strengthening of cooperation with institutions that train language specialists to meet the needs in the six official languages of the United Nations;

VII
Field offices, peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding

55. *Notes* the submission of the report to the Secretary-General of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the recent issuance of the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture;[10]

56. *Recognizes* the contribution of the Language and Communications Programme to promoting multilingualism within the United Nations, encourages in this regard the Department of Field Support and the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat to continue to cooperate closely, from within existing resources, to support the language learning needs of staff in the field, and requests the Secretary-General to provide further information in this regard at the seventy-first session;

57. *Stresses* the importance of proposing United Nations information, technical assistance and training materials, whenever possible, in the local languages of the beneficiary countries, including through locally based United Nations websites;

58. *Recalls* its resolution 69/287, in which it endorsed the proposals, recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations;[11]

59. *Takes note* of section II.D.1 of the report of the Secretary-General, requests the Secretary-General to continue his ongoing efforts in this regard, and recalls its resolution 66/297 of 17 September 2012 without prejudice to Article 101 of the Charter;

60. *Urges* the Secretariat to translate all peacekeeping training documents into the six official languages of the United Nations, from within existing resources, to enable and facilitate their use by all Member States, troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries, in particular, and by other involved institutions;

61. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session a comprehensive report on the full implementation of its resolutions on multilingualism;

62. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-first session the item entitled "Multilingualism".

---

[10] A/69/968-S/2015/490.

[11] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 19* (A/69/19), chap. V.